FELLOWSHIP IN PRAYER

Volume XVIII, Number 3, June 1967

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Our purpose: To promote the practice of prayer among all religious faiths whose fundamental belief is in God, regardless of race, creed, or color, and whose tenets include the universal attributes of truth, honesty, justice and mercy, that thereby there may arise a closer relation to Almighty God and a deeper spirit of fellowship among mankind.

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PRAYING HANDS

Elroy Shikles

Place your hands together, palm against palm, and finger against finger, in the attitude of prayer. Two thumbs, two index fingers, and so on, teach a lesson in prayer. Two hands remind us that both our physical and spiritual nature point to God.

Each set of two fingers help us to pray. First, we see the two thumbs. Let them teach us to *praise*. Let us praise our loving Father for all His wonderful greatness. "O Lord, our Lord, how excellent is Thy name in all the earth!" (Ps. 8:1)

Let the two index fingers remind us to give *thanks*. We must be thankful for the blessings already received before we ask for more. "Bless the

Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits'' (Ps. 103:2).

The two middle fingers teach us to confess our sins and mistakes. We can't go further in prayer until we remove these blocks. ''If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us. . .'' (1 John 1:9)

The next set of two fingers teaches us the prayer of *intercession*—to pray for others. We include our family, our church, the sick and distressed, our nation, and our world. Jesus' great prayer of intercession is in John 17.

Now we are ready to pray for ourselves. The little fingers teach us the prayer of *petition*. Our own needs are important, but not first. Jesus prayed for His disciples (John 17) ''I have manifested Thy name unto the men which Thou gavest me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from Thee, and they have believed that Thou didst send me. I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which Thou hast given me; for they are Thine.'' before he prayed for himself (Luke 22:41-44). ''Father, if Thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but Thine, be done.''

Praying hands can remind us of these five kinds of prayer.

Christianity, Judaism, Buddhism, Islam, Taoism—all the high religions, no matter what their claims, have grown in natural ways and evolved with history. It is encouraging that to a large extent, and at their best, they exalt the same principles and plead for the same righteousness and point to love and brotherhood as the path to the good life, both for individuals and for society.

— A. Powell Davies in SUNRISE

GOD'S CIRCLE

Lillian Wade Koerner

Never my prayer flows heavenward
but first comes from above—
the arc of my own reach to God
reflects His arc of love.

Never my heart desires to pray
but first is filled to brim
by Spirit of God, prayerfully
wooing my will to Him.

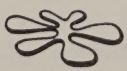
God fires the embers of each prayer,
empowers each deep call—
I truly pray when I behold
His circle, being all.

SUPPLICATION

Barbara M. Bogart

Twilight, slowly fading,
Brings an all-pervading
Feeling of contrition
For misplaced ambition.

Lord of all creation,
Hear my supplication:
Help me when I stumble—
Make me ever humble.



OBLATION

Catherine Cabeen Houck

The wind drifts through the garden,
rippling the dogwood tree.
Petals fall in soft benediction—
wafers already dipped in wine.

EDITORIAL

RANDOM NOTES FOR A RANDOM SEASON

Spring. The beginning of summer. Green. Flowers. Green and flowering smells. . . . It hasn't been spring at all in New York—"not a spring like we used to have," as everybody says. Are their memories failing? Or has the Gulf Stream really changed course and moved closer to the East Coast, turning everything upside down? Or should we blame the atom bomb? There seldom has been such a season of tornadoes, rains, and the latest possible snows. The mind and spirit are affected. Everybody, it seems, is discontent. With the President. With the war. With the poverty pro-

gram. With the theater season. With contemporary art. With, above all, each other. With, above even that, perhaps, themselves. Life is so difficult, with so many facets shining into everybody's eyes all at once, that it is hard to know where to put the blame and where to look for relief. The mind is unable to settle. It jumps from this to that, from that to this. . . .

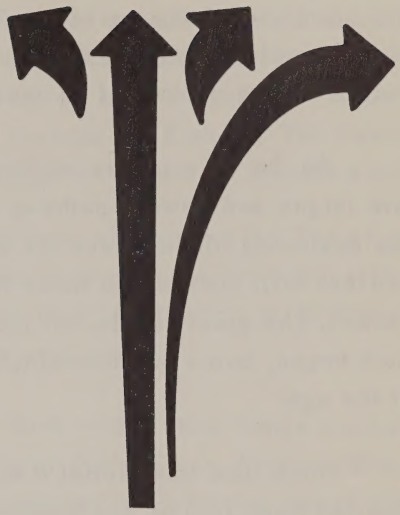
"Considering all the messes in the world which FELLOWSHIP IN PRAYER ought to be concerned about, what shall I write about? I ask one of our kindest and most intelligent friends. "I don't know," is the answer, "but just stay off the subject of peace." I see what is meant by this at-first astonishing remark. The believers of this country are as divided as it is possible to be, Cardinal Spellman calling for all-out support of the war in Vietnam, Dr. Blake, of the World Council of Churches, asking this country to quit what he considers one of the two worst dangers to the world, the other, in his opinion, being Communist China. Both men undoubtedly are one hundred per cent sincere. Everybody is sincere, and everybody disagrees. It is a touchy topic. And yet, ought we "stay off" it? If ever there was a matter which people of all faiths ought to be considering, it is peace and how to obtain it or war and why it is necessary. It is a subject which affects all of us—not only wives and mothers and fathers of servicemen and the servicemen themselves, not only politicians who must run for re-election sooner or later, but every living person with a consciousness and a conscience. Decide what you will, be *for* peace or *for* war. The important thing is that we participate in the life of our own times, difficult and brain-cracking though its problems are.

It is difficult because it is baffling. If anyone makes an attempt to think his way through all its problems, he is bound to sympathize with those who run the government, with those who

must decide, despite (it is possible) the same doubts and ambiguities that hound the rest of us, what is the right course to take.

The answer lies within each person. The problems of the life of our own times belong to all of us. Our decisions—for peace, for war—will affect the history of the times to come. We can vote. We can march. We can stay home beside the TV. We can write letters. We can hope. We can hate. We can think. We can pray.

Surely it is possible, now that it is beginning to be summer, green and flowering, that we can somehow somewhere find some time, some solitude, some stillness in which we can think and pray and, if nothing else, find our own equilibriums. . . . Perhaps it will be easiest for the young, already shot full of adrenalin by the crises that face them at every hour. Perhaps it will be hardest for the elderly, who, having found their own gardens of peace, do not care to be disturbed. Is that what the friend meant by "staying off" the subject of peace? That nobody be disturbed? I doubt it. It is that, in spite of our natural weariness, our bafflement, our sense of being caught up in a history that we cannot control, we are already so pro or con all these painful matters we don't actually require prodding. We are all too ready to wave flags or rip them into shreds. Every painful subject is so obvious to us all that any mention of one of them is apt to start a demonstration and so bring out the police and the newspaper photographers and then the editorial writers and the preachers and, finally, the anguished self-questioning of our own consciences. Do we really believe we are so right? Do we really believe the others are so wrong? . . . It is, like it or not, a most wounding time. Let us walk therefore into our most private gardens, into the green and flowering of our truest selves, and there let us pray.



MEDITATIONS ON THE FLAME OF A CANDLE

Francis Merchant

Prelude

Before me, I behold a candle surmounted by an oval flame. It is a symbol of ancient origin. Pondering on it, I embark upon a journey in thought. What are the qualities of the flame? I ask myself. Meditating further, I isolate various attributes: universality, aspiration, transformation, beauty, unity, constancy, communicability, sacrifice, light, and regeneration. Slowly my thoughts take shape and find expression in words....

Universality

The fire that flames in sun and stars is allied to the oval halo of a lighted candle. Thus, the symbol of fire is written into

the structure of the universe. Withdrawal of the sun's precious energy would darken the earth and destroy its inhabitants, for our very lives are dependent on nourishing light.

As far as man can explore the boundless tracts of space, fire reigns and hews a pathway through the tracts of dark. Since the beginning of time have the torches called suns been burning, and they will continue to flame forth after untold aeons shall have passed. The great candle, our incandescent sun, that God lit when time began, burns on unceasingly and everlastingly until the end of the age.

Since time immemorial men have venerated fire. The Hindus honored Agni, lord of this element. The Zoroastrians regarded the flame as sacred. "Our God is a consuming fire," averred the Hebrews. "God is light," declared the Christian. The Romans appointed vestal virgins to keep the sacred fires burning. Even science tells us that matter is a condensation of fiery energies.

But everything outer serves as a symbol for that which is inner. The fires about man are matched by the fires within him. Various are the flames that pulsate in his mind and heart. Thought is a fire of wondrous radiance; and so is Reason. Love and compassion are radiations of the heart. Benevolence and forgiveness are subtle fires that heal but do not burn. Of course, there are grosser fires, too, but these are associated with the smoldering flames of selfishness that give forth an abundance of asphyxiating smoke.

Indeed, man is a conflagration that must burn ever more subtly until he blends with the eternal fires of God.

Aspiration

Place a lighted match next to the wick of a candle and in

a moment a flame will unfailingly leap upward, oval in shape, orange in color. Ever and ever the candle burns downward while the flame moves upward. Here, then, we have a symbol of ardent aspiration, of a constant reaching towards the highest. The flame is directional, like a finger pointing ever towards a distant star.

All the candles in man, to be sure, are not yet lit. The wick untouched by the conflagrant match remains mute, unresponsive, dark. The unlit candle knows not that its destiny is to flame forth in light that no darkness can ever quench.

Those who have not lit the fires within them sense neither the potentialities nor the grandeur of their human destiny. Without the path-defining light, they wander in darkness among the byways where thorns and thistles abound.

But those who ignite the candle in the heart can walk by the light it generates, and move serenely in the darkness towards the fire that swallows all in unity.

What candles, then, shall we light in order that we may define the ongoing path that leads from death to immortality and from chaos to beauty?

The candle of compassion defines the suffering of humanity and prompts us to share with them our light.

The candle of devotion to the Most High enables us to walk the lighted way that inevitably leads to those who have become Living Flames.

The candle of aspiration outflames in beauty, uniting the seeker with the sought.

The candle of reason, lit within, converts the harsh fires

of aggression into the gentler ones of sweet persuasion.

When all the candles in man have been lit, he will shine with glory like a star.

Transformation

The impetuous action of fire converts heavy matter into delicate and aspiring flame. The tallow of a candle changes its form into a subtler essence.

Can we not similarly burn our ignorance into wisdom, our weakness into courage, our mortality into immortality? To do so would be an alchemical transformation of momentous significance.

The physical conversion of tallow into flame is a fairly simple matter that involves a match and a wick. The higher correspondence, the translation of personality desire into soul aspiration and spiritual flame, is a far more difficult process—yet, at the same time, far more wondrous.

A compulsive transformation occurs at death, for then the spirit's flame is forcibly separated from the body's tallow. Hard is the condition of those who have applied no match, for such persons must wander in their own darkness. Those who cling to the outlived flickerings of the body gravitate to the dusty twilight regions, held captive by the charred and unburnt desires of petty personality life. But those who identify themselves with the aspiring flame, knowing themselves in essence as fiery beings, rise to the dimensions of all-encompassing fire—transformation remarkable from the finiteness of earthly life into the vast halls of infinite flame.

Yet, at every moment we are being transformed, altering im-

perceptibly day by day, ever making choices that will lead to an identification with the downward-gravitating personality or with the upward-thrusting spirit. The transformation is inevitable, but the direction we must prescribe—and the direction is all.

Beauty

Sunrise and sunset diffuse a blessing of light upon the world. Living colors fill the sky, and the clouds reflect wondrous shades of orange, yellow, red, purple, and gold in a cascade of glory. It is an alphabet of resplendent beauty written daily on the heavens, a sacrament of light that ceremoniously attends the rising and the setting of the sun. Dawn is a perpetual reminder that the world of fire, symbolized by the ball of flame in the east, is inexpressibly beautiful. The grandeur of a starry night lies in the multitudinous, flaming bodies set off by the rich fabric of darkness.

Indeed, the universe was conceived in beauty. Man, to be sure, has fashioned spectacles for himself that screen out the wonder and the grandeur. He who would apprehend the glory must have a heart sensitive to the beautiful.

The artist trains his eye to behold the subtle, pleasing patterns of nature. Beauty, however, belongs to everyone, not simply to the specialist. As the sunrise, the delicate flowers, and the starlit heavens are given to all, so is beauty. Such experiences are not only aesthetic, but ethical. Graciousness of manner and benevolence of thought are also expressions of the beautiful—and so, too, is the striving spirit of man amidst the dark and oppressive earthly trials. Contrariwise, all forms of treachery and profanity, of self-aggrandizement, of contractive separativeness are ugly.

The revealing flame defines the path of beauty—a path that

leads from the finite to the infinite, and from the world of form to the domain of fire.

As the flame of a candle ascends, so does a symbolic flame in a striving human being rise in majesty. In both cases the light generated glows with an ancient beauty.

The traveler wandering in the dark beholds in the distance a lamp that provides him with a sense of direction, and he moves towards it. So, too, does beauty lead us to the ineffable light that has neither beginning nor end.

Unity

All things are reduced by fire to the unity of flame. Thus do the many become the one, the disjointed parts merge into an integral whole.

Everywhere we find evidence of differentiation: the division of the earth into many separate nations, the fragmentation of religions into competitive sects, the groupings of people who truly belong to the One Humanity. The time has come for fusion and integration. The separate nations belong to the earth, and earth is part of a larger scheme that includes other planets and other worlds. The religions of the world emanate in the last analysis from the Light of lights. The people who dwell on this globe are sparks of the One Flame, representatives of the One Life.

The ever-rising flame that burns in man symbolizes the spirit that feeds upon the tallow of the body until substance becomes aspiring fire and diversity fuses into unity. Freed from the limiting shell he carries about with him, man will one day evolve in the domains not of matter but of fiery essences.

(To be continued in the next issue)

2 POEMS

E. B. Twyeffort

**

FIRST TRIALS

First trials of unformed prayers
Are the small feathers cast by a cygnet
Riding aimlessly on ripples in shallow water.
But old prayers become the mature swan
Sure of its strength beneath the surface,
And wedging into calm water like a blunt arrow
Leaving an ever widening shaft behind.

**

THERE IS NO SCALE

There is no scale to weigh a cloud
A giant thunderhead—
Or weigh the shadow of a fish
Above a coral bed.

There is no scale to hold a wave,
Majestic, curved with spray,
Or one to hold a rainbow arch
In colorful display.

There is no scale to weigh my dreams.
Enough that Thou art there.
To weigh the balance of my soul
When I kneel down in prayer.

WHAT HEALS

Verlain Mahan

She had brought home her report card with an A for Physical Education. Behind this A was a miracle.

Three years ago my daughter lay in a hospital in serious condition. The doctors had diagnosed her case as rhuematic fever. This is the dreaded disease that leaves a wake of cardiac victims among children. According to professional consensus, my child would never completely recover. I brought her home and put her to bed. The long unhappy years of invalidism would be her dark horizon.

Where could I turn for help?

What could I do?

Friends called. Gifts came. Letters of hope and encouragement filled our country mail box. But my daughter was no better. The doctors were more grave. Family ties were far away and unavailable. I was alone with my problem. The bond between my child and myself was up to me either to strengthen or break.

I began to pray as I had never prayed before. I prayed every moment of the day. I practiced the PRESENCE when I gave my daughter her medicine. I laved her in prayer when I bathed her. I read aloud to her, praying silently with every word. I began to see that prayer had a place in everything, and that I could weave it into small as well as the big tasks of the day.

One morning after the doctor left giving me no hope, I stood

looking out the window at a spring rain storm with tears streaming down my face. It seemed as if the whole sky were crying tears of compassion. As is the nature of spring storms, the rain stopped as suddenly as it started. Then the clouds quickly disappeared and in their place a rainbow appeared. A symbol. I saw it as a symbol. A rainbow could follow the rain. It seemed as if a heavy burden was lifted from my shoulders.

I quickly raced upstairs. There was my daughter sitting up in bed laughing merrily at the imaginary antics of the stuffed animals that surrounded her. I realized that I could look to the future with strength and hope which had come in a human rainbow—a result of healing prayer.

A NEW BEGINNING

Mary O'Connor

World, you must fill out your hollow cheeks,
Remove the band of black that pinches your arm
And work for love and promise, not for greed,
And raise more crops of patience on each farm.

World, if you can burn your walls of hate
And drop suspicion's cloak in Raleigh's art
The Goddess that is Peace will soon step forth
And bring real joy to your blind and fickle heart.

THE ALCHEMY OF LOVE

Irving S. Cooper

If we would understand the nature of love we must look into the depths of the human consciousness until we find the divine that is concealed there. It is the inner man that we love, not the mere outer personality with its weaknesses and failings; it is the divine within each one which calls forth the divine from us, and in friendship and love we see the workings of a consciousness which transcends the mind and its limited capacities. In the words of a poet: "God nods to God when friend meets friend."

It is helpful to learn to distinguish between the higher self within us, the soul consciousness, which endures and grows ever wiser during the long pilgrimage, the milestones of which are the lives we live on earth, and the rather petty, personal consciousness that is all the soul is able to express in the brain during any one life. The personal consciousness is that which is interested in stock reports, baseball, the dinner table, dress, and gossip; the higher consciousness is that which inclines us to humanitarian movements, to the study of science, art, philosophy, and religions, to the search for truth and love, and to the practice of a noble life. The personality is only a useful instrument by means of which the soul takes part in the activities of the world and gains the experience it needs for its growth.

Oddly enough, however, the personality, limited as it is

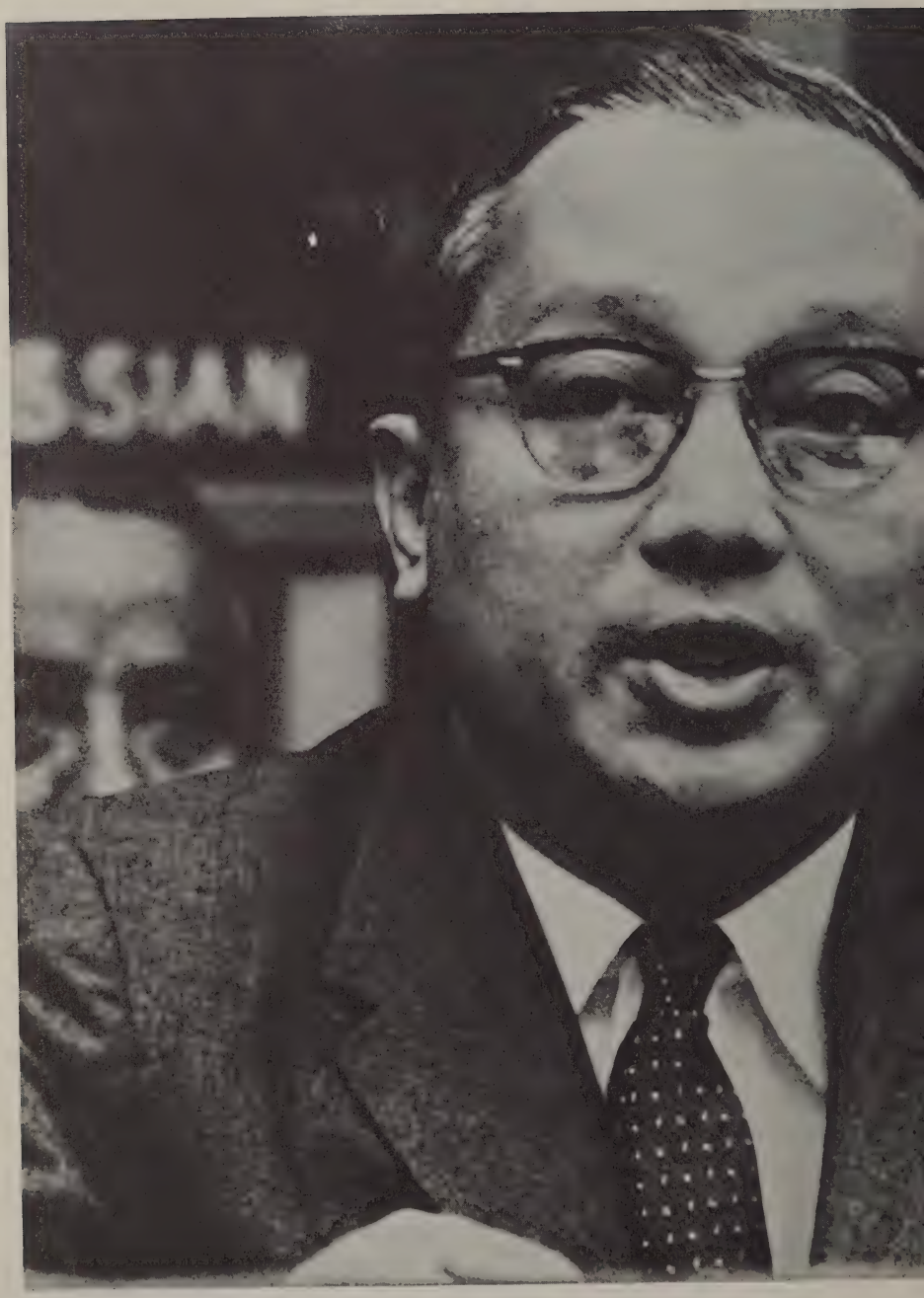
by the comparatively unresponsive brain, often regards itself as the whole consciousness, and denies the existence of that larger soul-consciousness, of which it is but a part. But when we learn to live here on earth a useful life molded along apiritual lines, the limits of the personality slowly widen until in time we become consciously aware of the existence and interests of that higher self, the soul, which is the root of our life.

If in meeting men and women we try to disregard this outer personality, and strip away all the little traits and mannerisms, all the peculiarities of thinking cultivated by environment and education, we shall find that behind each human consciousis a substratum of Spirit which is the same in all. Mentally and physically we differ from each other, but spiritually we are one. In the physical world this inner unity manifests as love which is, therefore, the truest expression of the Divine in us.

When we go among men let us strive to let the indwelling Divinity shine forth in undiminished splendor, by pouring out love from our hearts to all about us, and let no one pass by without some touch of its transforming power, without some gift from our spiritual treasury. Give your service to the world because you love that world and all the creatures in it. Do not restrict your love to humanity alone, but let it encompass both plants and animals as well, so that you may walk along the ways of life as the lover of every creature, as the servant of all that lives.

It is our duty to remain always calm and joyous, and never to permit depression to darken our thoughts; it is a privilege to carry happiness with us wherever we go—for this world is full of sorrow—and to act as channels for the divine Love, that it may pour outwards to all who suffer and bring consolation and peace.

— From DISCOVERY



U. Thant
Secretary General,
United Nations

INDIA'S SPIRITUAL AMBASSADOR

A speech delivered on the occasion of Swami Vivekananda's Centenary celebration under the auspices of Shri Ramakrishna Mission, New York.

I certainly feel it a privilege to be asked to participate in this memorable function and to address this distinguished audience. And for this I am most grateful, particularly to Swamiji, for having made my participation possible. As a matter of fact, I was very closely connected with the work of the Ramakrishna Mission in Burma for many years

before I left Rangoon to take up a new post in New York, about six years ago, but since my arrival in this country, unfortunately, due to pressure of work, I have not been able to associate myself with the very noble functions performed by the Mission in this city.

We are celebrating Swami Vivekananda's Centenary and on this occasion, of course, it will be superfluous for me to recount many of his extraordinary activities, but I would like to touch on a few aspects of his missionary work, particularly in this country.

Swami Vivekananda, as most of you are aware, was the greatest spiritual ambassador of India, if I may say so, in the history of Asia. The main purpose of his historic visit to the United States of America, over sixty years ago, was to find a synthesis, if I can interpret and assess his activities in this country. He was very keen to bring about this synthesis between India and the United States, between Asia and the West. To understand Swami Vivekananda it is very important to understand the cultural and spiritual background of India, and for that matter, the cultural and spiritual background of Asia.

In Asia, as most of you know, we attach much more importance to the mind than to the body, and still much more importance to the spirit than to the mind. Traditionally, the aim of education in Asia has been—I stress the word traditionally—to discover what is happening inside of us, to discover what is the truth, to discover truth inside of us, to learn to understand the extraordinary moral and spiritual qualities of man. In other words, the traditional aim of education and culture and civilization in Asia has been, throughout the centuries, the discovery of oneself, and to try to understand the spiritual qualities such as humility, reverence for old people, and so on. In the West, the stress has been on the development of the intellect, if my interpretation of Western educational

aims and ideals is correct. There is too much stress on the intellectual development of man. The aim of education in the West—when I say West, of course, it applies to the United States of America, Western Europe, and other countries of Europe too—the aim of education in the West has been, and still is, to create doctors, scientists, engineers, to discover outer space, to go to the moon and to Mars and the stars, while at the same time the development of the moral and spiritual qualities of man is more or less ignored.

I feel rather strongly that the exclusive intellectual development without a corresponding moral and spiritual development is sure to lead us from one crisis to another. At the same time, in the middle of the twentieth century, in this space age, atomic age, a purely moral and spiritual development unaccompanied by corresponding intellectual development is also an anchronism. So what is necessary in this second half of the twentieth century is a certain kind of harmony, a certain harmonizing activity, by which man must be fully integrated. The development of man must be intellectual, moral, and spiritual. Only then will man be able to achieve the objectives set out in his own particular religion.

I think if we attempt to analyse the main purpose of Swami Vivekananda's mission to this country—my interpretation is that he wanted to find a harmony, a kind of a synthesis between the Eastern concept of culture and civilization and the Western concept of culture and civilization. It is very true of these tense times, much more than sixty years ago. What we need today is not to neglect or ignore the moral and spiritual qualities of mankind left by centuries of tradition, and which is the key of all religion.

Another aspect of Swami Vivekananda's mission, to my knowledge, is the need of tolerance in human relations.

Not only religious tolerance but also tolerance in all spheres of activity. I think this message is also very necessary in these tense times; much more, if I may say so, much more than sixty years ago. If we recount a few phases of historical developments—let us say, for instance, a few centuries ago, there was no such thing as religious tolerance. Religious tolerance was unthinkable. Let us take, for instance, the Crusades. During the time of the Crusades the Christians believed, and they believed very strongly, that all non-Christians were heretics. The same applied to Muslims, perhaps to Hindus, perhaps to Buddhists, perhaps to Jews, but according to European history during the time of the Crusades the Muslims also believed very strongly that Christians were heretics. So both the Christians and the Muslims (they were known as Saracens in those days) decided to put the others to the sword.

Various crusades took place resulting in the death of tens of thousands of people, both Christians and Muslims, but when reason prevailed, both the Christians and the Muslims realized that both great religions could exist in amity, side by side without clashes, without hostilities, and without war. And since that time Christianity and Islam existed side by side in amity. Now in the twentieth century, of course, there is religious tolerance. Of course, there may be some exceptional cases in certain parts of the world, but generally speaking what humanity did not experience say, a hundred or two hundred years ago, is a reality now. Although there was no religious tolerance two or three generations ago, there is today religious tolerance.

With the same analogy, I may say, and I am sure you will agree with me, that in the second half of the twentieth century, there is no political tolerance. We should not be surprised. Human nature is such that it likes to indulge in some passions like

hatred and bitterness—sometimes even hysteria. But my feeling is, although there is no political tolerance in these days there will be political tolerance, perhaps in our generation and probably in the next one or two generations. This spirit of tolerance, this philosophy of live and let live, this concept of trying to understand the other's point of view, has been what Swami Vivekananda strove to put across—particularly to the American people. I think it is a very great lesson to be learned from the teachings of Swamiji.

When we say that his main mission here was a search for a synthesis and an appeal for tolerance, we should also try to understand the concept of culture, of civilization. The concept of civilization, of course, is very difficult to define. There is a mistaken assumption, if I may say so, regarding the concept of civilization. There seems to be a general feeling that there is one kind of civilization in the West and a different type of civization existing in the East. I feel that this is a fallacy. Civization connotes certain qualities of the heart. A civilized Indian, for instance, cannot be distinguished mentally and spiritually—morally and spiritually, from a civilized American. But a civilized Indian and a civilized American will find themselves very different from any of their own compatriots in their own countries, so we cannot classify civilization in a particular region. It is primarily concerned with the qualities of the heart and the mind.

There is also another misconception, that wars and tensions were generated by conflicts of civilizations or conflicts of cultures. I think this is also a fallacy. If you read history you will find that England and France, or France and Germany, had wars for centuries, off and on, although they belonged to the same system of civilization and the same system of culture. The same can be said of many Asian

countries which have been, throughout the centuries, at war with one another, although they belonged to the same culture and they subscribed to the same religious systems. So tensions and conflicts do not arise necessarily from the conflicts of culture, or conflicts of civilizations. They rise primarily out of the evil in human beings, irrespective of geographical regions. I think this fact was also stressed by Swami Vivekananda in many of his speeches and statements.

He, of course, attempted to teach many of his American friends the methods and procedures involved in meditation and contemplation which have been the traditional methods of finding our own selves. As I said earlier, the stress of education in Asia, and particularly in India, a very rich cultural country for thousands of years, has been to discover what is happening inside of us. I have said earlier that the stress of education in the West has been traditionally on the intellectual development of man. But in Asia, particularly in India, we try to discover what is happening inside of us by methods of contemplation and meditation—which, of course, is very difficult for the Western audiences to understand. I think Swami Vivekananda attempted to present a very simple exposition of these methods of contemplation and meditation so that the Westerners may not be lopsided in their development—only exclusively in the intellectual field. Because he felt, very rightly, that the mere intellectual development will lead only to the discovery of what is outside of us. In America, in Europe, in Russia, in these countries, what is outside of us is very clearly defined while at the same time what is inside of us remains a deep, dark, jungle tract. So he brought out this idea of meditation and contemplation, with some success, of course, as you all know from many of the publications published since his visit here, and I think it may perhaps be appropriate for me to refer to one of his statements regarding this method of meditation and contempla-

tion.

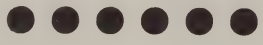
This is what Swamiji wrote on meditation: "You must keep the mind fixed on one object; meditation should be like an unbroken stream of oil. The ordinary man's mind is scattered on different objects, and at the time of meditation, too, the mind is at first apt to wander. Let any desire whatever arise in the mind, sit calmly and watch what sorts of ideas are coming. By continuing to watch in that way, the mind becomes calm and there are no thought-waves in it. These waves represent the thought activity of the mind. Those things that you have previously thought about too deeply have transformed themselves into a subconscious current, and therefore they come up in the mind in meditation. The rise of these waves or thoughts, during meditation, is evidence that your mind is tending towards concentration."

To my knowledge this is the simplest recipe to practice this very noble and very desirable art of meditation and contemplation which is still being practiced in many parts of Asia. Then Swami Vivekananda among many of his messages had this very significant and very pertinent message for these tense times. He said, "In this country I do not come to convert you to a new belief. I want you to keep your own belief. I want to make the Methodist a better Methodist, the Presbyterian a better Presbyterian, the Unitarian a better Unitarian." On this subject also, I think it is worth quoting his attitude toward religious tolerance which, to me, is one of the wisest maxims which ever came into my experience. He said, "I accept all the religions that were in the past, and worship with them all. I worship God with every one of them, in whatever form they worship Him. I shall go to the mosque of the Mohammedan; I shall enter the Christian church and kneel before the Crucifix; I shall enter the Buddhist temple, where I shall take refuge in Buddha and his Law; I shall go into the forest and sit down in meditation with the Hindu who is trying to see the Light which enlightens the hearts of

everyone. Not only shall I do these things, but I shall keep my heart open for all that may come in the future."

These are very wise words and, friends, on this auspicious occasion when we are doing honor to one of the greatest men of all time, let us dedicate ourselves anew to this pledge: to make Christians better Christians, Hindus better Hindus, Muslims better Muslims, Buddhists better Buddhists, and Jews better Jews.

—From MIRA



IN THE SHADOW

Helen Miller Beason

I stand in awe and wonder
So many things I ponder
As I stand here in the shadow of the cross.

Of the blessed life He gave so free
Of the blood He shed to save even me
I pray that it may never count for loss.

Of the trials and temptations that He too had to meet
Of His great overcomings that I may never know defeat
As I stand here in the shadow of the cross.

Of the love which flows so freely from His heart into mine
So great I can't understand it—I only know it is divine
Of His power and compassion, His truths and His preachings
His mercy and prayers—His wonderful teachings
I pray that it may never count for loss.

Yes, I stand in awe and wonder
So many things I ponder
As I stand here in the shadow of the cross.

GRACE

Your waiting hand for me to take
and walk, new-born, this moment's day—
no questions asked, required merit,
no vows for future years to pay.

Strange what sure and growing strength
for one, when hand takes proffered hand,
to climb, flesh-scarred, this mountain's coil—
so strong is love without demand.

4 POEMS

Emily Sargent Councilman

STRAIGHT SIGHT

As slow-melting wax from old candles,
each new year dissolves, undone
as an entity, merging serenely—
seen backward, our years are as one.

Lived forward, each tall candle showers
its halo of laughter grown strong,
where giving is lighted fulfillment,
and wonder, an echoing song.

NO LESSER GIFT

I said, I'll wait till I
have purer gold to bring:
how give some lesser thing
my sovereign Lord and King?

I'll offer no smoldered sigh,
no guilt, proffer no less
than purity, confess
no tainted righteousness

while I lay incense by
(fragrant reverence stored)
for honoring the Word,
Emmanuel adored.

But now, rank moldy dust
my hoarded gold; incense
but vapor, recompense
for faded diligence....

"Give me your sickest lust,"
I hear His voice within,
"your clutching, chosen sin;
where it costs you most, begin.

"It will come, love's rich crust
to inner sanctity
from other gods wrenched free
for me, for Me."

TO WAGE PEACE— OR WAR?

Better
to go on bombing?
Depend on steel and fire?
Maintain our upright stance of power?
Better to multiply marked
and unmarked graves
for men?

How many
peace proposals
lie in unmarked graves?
Each one once had a fighting chance
for fisted hands to open.
Hidden...forgotten
graves?

The waiting time of the night is just like it was. For it is the time of night when I listen and wait for the sound of your key in the door. It is the time of night when I make believe that soon you will be home with me. Then my world will be lovely and bright the way it used to be. I'll feel the touch of your hand once more; in your nearness I'll find the warmth I always found. I think of your smile and hear your voice so plainly as if you were here. Please God, let me go on pretending for this is the only way I can bear the silence around me, waiting for your key in the door.

(By courtesy of Eloise Hastings)

THE TRUE FRIEND

(Wisdom of the Talmud, Rabbi Eleazer)

A man had three friends. One friend he loved dearly; the second he also loved; but the third he regarded with less affection. One day the king commanded this man to appear immediately before him. The man was greatly alarmed. Had someone spoken ill of him or falsely accused him before his king? In fear and trembling, he called upon each of his three friends to accompany him.

First, he turned to his dearest friend, and was greatly disappointed when this friend found it impossible to go with him to the king.

He then turned to his second friend: "Will you go with me?" But the latter replied: "I will go with you only as far as the palace gates, but I cannot enter with you into the palace."

In desperation, the man finally appealed to his third

friend, the one to whom he had been least devoted. Without hesitation, this neglected friend assured him: "Of course I will accompany you, but first I'll go immediately to the palace and plead for you with the king."

The first friend is a man's wealth which he must leave behind when he departs from this world, as it is written: 'Riches profit not in the day of reckoning."

The second friend is a man's relatives, who can only follow him to the graveside, as it is written: "No man can by any means redeem his brother from death."

The third, least-considered friend, is the good deeds of man's life. These never desert him and even precede him to plead his cause before the King of kings, as it is written: "And your righteousness shall go before you."

(By courtesy of Murray Young)

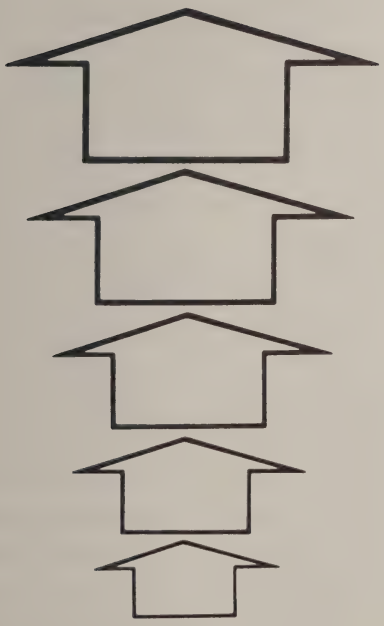
TO GOD, THE PRAISE

Esther Bell Heins

We praise Thee God, for beauty rare
Thou givest us on earth;
We praise Thee for the golden wheat,
The miracle of birth.

We praise Thee, God for mountains high,
The clean sweet scent of pine;
The fleet foot in the forest too—
And all the stars that shine.

We praise Thee God for snowflakes white,
A fire near which to doze;
The mighty sea; a streamlet gay;
And for a garden rose.



HE RESTORETH MY SOUL

Mildred Long

In the midst of the Shepherd Psalm the Psalmist injects a sentence that pertains to his own particular need. He drops the analogy of sheep, and bursts forth with, "He restoreth my soul." No one can read this Psalm with understanding or sympathy without identifying with the Psalmist.

"He restores my soul." It is personal and vital. God, the Great Shepherd, does for me what I cannot do for myself. Food and drink, shelter and protection are all required. But this is indispensable. "He restores my soul."

Who of us has not needed soul-restoration? Who of us has not wandered away from the designed path? Or fallen into a pit? Or become lost in brambles or darkness? And though needing rescue for our bodies, most of all we needed rescue for our souls.

Perhaps at this moment the weight of David's sin lay heavy on his heart. Or sorrow for the

waywardness of his people. Or regret that he was not a more steadfast leader. But in this short sentence he identifies with the need of mankind. He tells the entire Gospel story: man astray, man with a lost soul, and God out seeking, finding, restoring.

No sweeter words can fall upon man's ear than these words, "He restores my soul."

No matter what it is that has wounded the soul—sin, guilt, grief, hurts inflicted by life, fear—He can and will restore the soul. If we let Him, He uses each one of the wounds to aid in the restoration. Nothing is lost. No permanent damage is done. There is no blight or sickness He cannot heal. Even as He promised Israel, "I will restore unto you the years the locust hath eaten," so He says to us, "I will restore all, I will make you new creatures."

His plan for restoration is a simple one. It does not involve stress or strain. It consists in the one thing sheep excel in—ability and willingness to follow the shepherd, to stay with him and trust themselves to him.

A story is told of a certain wayward, willful lamb that was always straying away and getting into trouble. The shepherd had to go off and leave the flock to rescue the lamb. This was dangerous and it happened too often.

One day the shepherd broke the lamb's foreleg. Tenderly he bandaged it, put on a splint and took upon himself the added responsibility. He fed the lamb by hand, gave it water from his cup, carried it in his arms as he led the flock day by day. At night the lamb lay cozy and warm beside him. When the leg was mended, nothing could induce the lamb to leave the heels of the shepherd. He loved him so much it was his chief joy to be just where the shepherd was.

Have you ever been a lost lamb? I have. Has your soul needed restoring? Mine has. And I learned that God could use the very things that crushed my soul and broke my heart

and tempted me to despair, to heal, to restore, to redeem.

He restores my soul by requiring me to stay close to Him. My physical weakness was so great I knew only God could meet my need. The doctors had nothing to offer. If God did not help me, I was lost. This need, this separation from my Source of Life, drove me to my knees. "I sought the Lord and He heard me and saved me," the Psalmist cried. "In my distress I cried unto the Lord and He heard me." I can say it with the Psalmist.

When I was misjudged, falsely condemned, treated with scorn, I could not defend myself. But when I allowed such experiences to draw me close to His loving arms I was healed of resentment, I was given grace to forgive, I was filled with His love. Thus my soul was restored and joy came in greater abundance.

The healing of the wounded soul is by contact with the Healer. Let Him feed you His Bread of Life, and give you to drink from the Fountain of Life. Let Him carry you in His arms and love you. Drink in His love into the pores of your body and soul through this contact. Let His life surge through you in healing power. Spend time with Him and imbibe Him. Think His thoughts, learn to speak His words, study to see through His eyes and understand through His heart. Practice His presence. Let it become your life to be where He is and do what He does.

Then some day He will put you down upon the ground again on your own feet. And behold all life will be different. Now the attractions that formerly made you wander have no appeal to you. Now your chief joy is to stay right by your Master's heels. All is changed. Desires, attitudes, ambitions, all changed. Your soul is restored, made new, formed in His image. This is the goal for each of us. And this goal can be reached in only one way—contact with His loving heart. For we become like Him whom we love and worship.

4 POEMS

William Walter DeBolt

PROOF OF THE PUDDING REVISED

Proof of the pudding
depends less on the eating
than on later dreams.

POWER IN PRAYER

When there's power in prayer,
angels come as when Jacob
dreamed at Heaven's gate.

CALL TO WORSHIP

When called to worship
at permanent tombstones, doubt
like patient Thomas.

SPRING, LIKE A TROPIC BIRD

Spring, like a tropic bird,
pauses a little while
to rest
and the world
borrows its beauty.

NOTICES and COMMENTS

THE PASSING OF A FELLOWSHIP ADVISOR. After our April issue went to press, we received notice of the death, on March 14, of Grace Titus (Mrs. J. Harvey Titus) following a brief illness. Mrs. Titus was a sister of the late Emma Evans, the wife of our founder, and had been a member of FIP since its inception. She was an advisor in the Western Zone for many years and more recently in the Central Zone. Before selling her home in Seattle, Washington, she worked towards furthering our work and interesting friends in FELLOWSHIP IN PRAYER, particularly on the West Coast.

LIBRARY NOTES. Our bookshelves continue to expand with the addition of contributed volumes. At this time, we are especially grateful to our Contributing Editor, Carla Patsuris, who recently gave a number of books to our library.

TO OUR SUBSCRIBERS: We extend a cordial welcome to the many *new* subscribers who have found FELLOWSHIP IN PRAYER helpful and inspiring. Also we are sincerely grateful to those readers who have renewed and are renewing their subscriptions. Ours is a nonprofit fellowship, and it is only through the cooperation and help of friends that FIP will be extended throughout the world. Please notify us if your address has been changed.

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A KEY OF THE KINGDOM

Frank Ankenbrand, Jr.

Oh, God,
Make of me a key,
Fashioned
On the red
Anvil of your love.

Use me to open
Locks of your devising.

Let no doors
Stand between
The plotting
And the blueprint

Of the reality
Of your dream.

"For a world united in prayer"

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